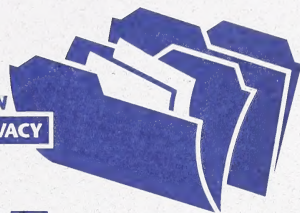


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**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION  
AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY**



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 1995 – 1996

**Alberta**  
PUBLIC WORKS,  
SUPPLY AND SERVICES





ALBERTA

PUBLIC WORKS, SUPPLY AND SERVICES

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*Stan Woloshyn, Minister  
MLA, Stony Plain Constituency*

November 1996

Honourable Stanley Schumacher  
Office of the Speaker  
Legislative Assembly of Alberta  
Room 325, Legislature Building  
Edmonton, Alberta  
T5K 2B6

Dear Sir:

In accordance with Section 81 of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, it is my honour to present to you the first annual report on the operation of this *Act* for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1996.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Stan Woloshyn".

Stan Woloshyn  
Minister





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# Message from the Minister

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In the 1992 Speech from the Throne, the Alberta government committed to developing access to information legislation. Following an extensive public consultation process, Alberta's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* was passed on June 1, 1994 and was proclaimed into law for all government departments, boards and agencies on October 1, 1995.

As the Minister responsible for the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, it is my pleasure to present the first annual report on the operation of Alberta's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. It covers the period from the Act's proclamation date of October 1, 1995 to the fiscal year ending March 31, 1996.

The *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* is intended to balance the public's right to access and the individual's right to privacy regarding information held by the Government of Alberta. As government departments routinely release information on a regular basis, the Act is intended to be used only when information is not available through the regular channels. On the privacy side, one of the most important aspects of this legislation is that it places stricter safeguards on personal information. This is becoming of particular concern to the public with the advances in technology.

In the first six months of the Act's operation, 980 requests were received under the Act. In over 90 per cent of the requests, responses could be provided within 30 days. Where delays were encountered in responding, it was usually because the requested information contained third-party information for which consultation and consent were required prior to the response.

# Implementation

Each ministry appointed a Freedom of Information and Privacy (FOIP) Coordinator to implement and administer the *Act*. The coordinators served as the liaison with PWSS in preparing for the *Act*'s implementation.

## Legislation

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The *Act* is being proclaimed in stages. Provisions prohibiting the destruction of records to avoid an access request were proclaimed immediately on June 1, 1994. Sections enabling the appointment of an Information and Privacy Commissioner and the establishment of his office were proclaimed December 1, 1994.

Mr. Robert C. Clark was appointed Alberta's first Information and Privacy Commissioner on June 1, 1995.

Regulations to identify the complete list of public bodies included under the *Act*, establish a fee schedule and address a number of items in the *Act* were proclaimed on October 1, 1995.

## Administration

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Two manuals were developed by the department to help define and establish implementation processes. The FOIP Policy Manual provided the interpretation of the *Act* for reference and to enable consistent application of the *Act*. The FOIP Implementation and Procedures Guide provided direction in assigning responsibilities and giving detailed administrative guidelines. The two manuals were distributed to key contacts across government and made available for sale to the public through the Queen's Printer Bookstores.



## Public Awareness

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An introductory pamphlet on the *Act* was developed to increase public awareness. PWSS also processed many inquiries about the legislation, provided information sessions on the legislation to a variety of interest groups, and participated in conferences sponsored by groups asking for assistance in understanding what implications the *Act* held for them.

As well, an annual conference on Information and Privacy was initiated in cooperation with a private sector organizer. The conference attracted participants from inside and outside government.

## The Alberta Directory

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The Alberta Directory was developed in accordance with section 82 of the *Act*. It is designed to assist applicants in requesting information under the *Act* by describing the mandate, organization, and types of records in government and giving the address and telephone number of the FOIP Coordinator. It was distributed to libraries, public buildings, constituency offices, and government offices throughout the province prior to October 1, 1995.

The Alberta Directory is available for purchase by the public through the Queen's Printer Bookstores.

# Requests Received Under the *Act*

<i>Number of Requests</i>	<i>Received in Period</i>	<i>Per cent of Requests</i>	<i>Completed in Period</i>	<i>Per cent Completed</i>
General Information	404	41	366	91
Personal Information	574	59	523	91
Correction of Personal Information	2	0	2	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>980</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>891</b>	<b>91%</b>

## Distribution of Requests

<i>Department</i>	<i>Number of Requests</i>
Family and Social Services	436
Justice	114
Environmental Protection	63
Health	45
Treasury	33
Economic Development and Tourism	28
Municipal Affairs	27
Labour	26
Other departments & public bodies	208
<b>Total</b>	<b>980</b>

## Requests for General Information

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The largest single group of applicants were elected officials with over 51 per cent of the 404 requests. Businesses were second with 23 per cent of the requests. Organizations, which submitted seven per cent of the requests, include special interest groups, lobby groups, professional and occupational associations and non-profit organizations. The general public made 14 per cent of the requests for general information.

## Access Decisions

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Of the 404 requests for general information which were received, 366 were completed in the reporting period.

Of the 574 requests for access to an individual's own personal information, a total of 523 were completed within the period.

Most of the requests outstanding at the end of the reporting period had been received within the previous 30 days.

## Access Fees

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### General Information Requests

For general information requests, a \$25 initial fee is required and payable with the request. Additional charges apply for: labour for locating, retrieving and preparing records for disclosure; computer programming and processing; and copying records. There is no charge for reviewing and severing records in response to a request. If the estimated charge for a request is less than \$150, nothing is collected beyond the initial fee.

Additional charges were only collected on 11 requests for general information. The average amount collected was \$282.

The initial fee for a recurring request (one that continues to have effect for a specified period of up to two years) is \$50.00. Three such requests were received.

### **Personal Information Requests**

For a request for an applicant's own personal information, only copying costs are charged and only if the cost exceeds \$10. Copying costs were only charged on 90 requests for personal information. The average amount charged was \$38.

## **Revenue Collected**

A total of \$9,311.00 was collected in the period from October 1, 1995 to March 31, 1996.









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